

No. 113.

CHINA

AS A MISSION FIELD.

A PREMIUM TRACT

PREMIUM OFFERED BY REV. I. J. ROBERTS, LATE MISSIONARY TO CHINA.]

By Rev. M. J. KNOWLTON,
MISSIONARY TO CHINA.

PHILADELPHIA:
BIBLE AND PUBLICATION SOCIETY
530 ARCH STREET.

WHAT CHINA IS.

The Rev. J. L. Nevius, in his late work on "China and the Chinese," gives the following comparison with the United States:

In giving a correct general idea of China to Western nations, I cannot, perhaps, do better than to institute a comparison between it and the United States, to which it bears a striking resemblance. It occupies the same position in the Eastern Hemisphere that the United States does in the Western. Its line of sea-coast on the Pacific resembles that of the United States on the Atlantic, not only in length but also in contour. Being found within almost the same parallels of latitude, it embraces the same varieties of climate and productions. A river as grand as the Mississippi, flowing east, divides the empire into two nearly equal parts, which are often designated as "North of the River," and "South of the River." It passes through an immense and fertile valley, and is supplied by numerous tributaries having their rise in mountain ranges on either side, and also in the Himalayas on the west.

The area of China proper is about the same as that of the organized states of the American Union. The resemblance holds also in the artificial divisions. While our country is divided into more than thirty states, China is divided into eighteen provinces; this division furnishing still another name for the empire, in common use, Shih-pah-seng, "The Eighteen Provinces." These provinces are on an average about twice as large as our states. As our states are divided into counties, so each

CHINA AS A MISSION FIELD.

A PREMIUM TRACT.

By Rev. M. J. KNOWLTON,
MISSIONARY TO CHINA.

"It is a great step towards the Christianizing of our planet, if Christianity gain entrance into China." Thus spake Neander, in a speech at Berlin on the Chinese mission, July 6, 1850, but eight days before his death.

His reasons for this deep interest in that field, were these: "In the first place, there is *that vastness*; since thereby Christianity may have access to a third part of the earth's population. Moreover, there is that peculiar interest which the *quality of the nation* affords. We find here a nation in which, for centuries, there has been a large amount of civilization and culture; where many arts and handicrafts flourished a long time before they were thought of in the European nations."

That "great step towards the Christianizing of our planet," has been taken. The opening of the Chinese empire,—the throwing open of the doors to admit the gospel to a third of the human race,—is undoubtedly one of the greatest among the great events of the present age, and one that should awaken no ordinary interest throughout the Christian world. It is an event in which the hand of God is clearly manifest, preparing

the way, and leading forward the grand yet gradual movement of his kingdom, toward the period when the heathen shall be given to the Son for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession. The time has evidently come, when every Christian should inform himself respecting this field, and labor for its evangelization.

In the following pages, it is proposed to notice those characteristics that render China a mission-field of paramount importance. Those features are chiefly the following: Its antiquity; its vastness; the "quality" of the people; their benighted and lost condition; the religious history of China; the encouraging success of Protestant missions in that field; and the fact that it is now brought so near Christian nations.

1. Its great antiquity. The origin of the Chinese, from the best light we have, appears to be as follows: During the first century after the confounding of tongues, five or six nomadic tribes from the region southeast of the Caspian sea, made their way eastward by successive stages seeking out the best watered and most productive places, and finally settled along the banks of the Yellow river in the north, and in the basin of the great Yang-tze river, in the central and western portions of what is now the Chinese empire. The tribe which constituted the original progenitors of the Chinese race, chiefly by their superior skill in agriculture, their settled habits of labor, and by possessing themselves of the low, rich lands along the water courses, which the renowned "emperor" Yu, drained and protected from inundation by building dikes, became more prosperous than their neighboring tribes; and gradually, by conquests, alliances, and intermarriages, they ab-

sorbed all the other tribes except the *Mian-tze*, who exist among the mountains as a distinct race to this day.

China was consolidated into a nation, in the feudal form, about the beginning of the *Chow* dynasty, 1088 B. C., and the present despotic form of government took the place of the feudal system, about two hundred and twenty years before the Christian era.

Thus, China has existed almost from the time of the confusion of tongues; and has had a consolidated government or nationality nearly three thousand years. Other ancient nations, as Assyria, Babylonia, ancient Egypt, ancient Greece, and the ancient Turanian and Aztec nations, all rose and flourished for a time, but at length became extinct, and the mouldering ruins of their renowned cities alone tell of their former greatness. Later empires, as the Syrian and Roman, rose, had their period of prosperity, power, and luxury, and long since fell into decay.¹ But there stands China, unmoved by the waves of time, existing through all the long ages, and through twenty-eight changes of dynasty; with her system of government, her laws, her arts, her habits and customs, unchanged; and greater in population and wealth during the first half of the present century, than in any former period of her long history! A wonderful nation *that*, thus to withstand the shock of repeated bloody revolutions, and changes of rulers, and remain the same amid all national vicissitudes for so many ages. Why, at the departure of the Hebrews from Egypt, China was already about seven hundred years old; when Isaiah prophesied of her future conversion to God (Isa. xlix. 12), she had existed fifteen centuries; and while Homer was composing and singing the *Iliad*, her blind minstrels were celebrating the deeds

of her ancient heroes, Yaou, Shun, and Yu, whose tombs had been with them nearly thirteen hundred years!

2. The vastness of this field. Some idea of the vast extent of the Chinese Empire may be obtained by considering its line of sea coast, running nearly three thousand miles; its extensive mountain ranges; its broad plains, rich and "well watered" as the plain of Jordan that Lot beheld and coveted, yea, even "as the garden of the Lord," the largest of which has an area of about three hundred thousand square miles; its magnificent rivers, the largest, the Yang-tze, being thirty-three hundred miles in length, the third river in the world, and draining a basin of about eight hundred and fifty thousand square miles, in which dwells a population of some one hundred and eighty millions; its vast area, embracing nearly five million square miles, or greater by about a million and a half than that of the whole United States, including Alaska, and about one million and three hundred thousand square miles greater than all Europe.

But the mere physical features of the empire, are of small importance as compared with the vastness of the population. A stranger on first visiting that land, is most forcibly struck with the immense number of people that he sees swarming on every hand. Wherever he goes, to the hills or to the islands, whose bare and apparently barren summits appear incapable of sustaining a single human being, even there he finds habitations and hamlets filled with inhabitants; he finds all the vast plains thickly dotted with populous villages; he beholds all the water-courses and canals swarming with boats instinct with human life; while in the streets of every one of the numerous great cities throughout the empire

he finds, on every day in the year, a vast crowd of human beings hurrying, jostling, hustling on as if it were some great festal day.

The Chinese census of 1839 gave a population of four hundred and fifteen millions. And though some have thought so great a number to be incredible, yet for several years past, it has generally been admitted by those best acquainted with China, that at least the population is about four hundred millions. During the last twenty years, however, civil wars, famine, and pestilence have probably reduced the population to about three hundred and seventy millions. Even at this estimate, the population is nearly ten times that of the United States, more than thirteen times that of Great Britain and Ireland, about one-third greater than that of all Europe, and more than double the population of the four continents of North and South America, Africa, and Oceanica, all combined; in short, about one-third of the earth's inhabitants is found in this one empire.

It is this inconceivable number of our fellow men, possessing in common with us intelligent immortal souls, capable of indefinite improvement and happiness, that especially constitutes China the greatest and most important of mission fields. The mass of Christians, it is to be feared, have but a very vague and inadequate idea of the vast extent and importance of this field, which but recently has been opened to missionary effort. Has not their attention been too exclusively confined to the smaller fields already opened and occupied, so that now it is difficult for them to comprehend the greatness and sublimity of the enterprise here presented, and which demands the most active employment of all the energies

and appliances at their command? What is the Christianizing of a few islands and small countries, compared with the great work to be done in this populous empire! Were all the islands of Oceanica, with Siam, Burmah, Assam, and all the other bordering nations to become thoroughly Christianized, still they are comparatively so small that the great system of heathenism in Asia, would scarcely feel the shock. It would be but the carrying of a few pickets and out-posts, while the main fortress remains strong and impregnable. Until China is converted to God, idolatry and heathenism will remain in their pride, power, and ascendancy in the world.

Should not then, all who are interested in the spiritual conquest of the world, fix their attention earnestly upon this stronghold of heathenism? Should they not in this age of broad views and great enterprises, take the most enlarged views of the great work before them, and not allow a few minor tribes or nations to absorb their attention and circumscribe their effort? Surely the great commission will not be obeyed, until the gospel shall be faithfully preached to every dweller in the seventeen hundred walled cities, and the hundreds of thousands of villages throughout the Chinese Empire!

3. The superior quality or character of the people, is another important feature of this field. The Chinese have more strength of intellect, more solidity of character, and a higher civilization, than any other heathen nation. This is shown by their early formation of a wise system of government, and an able code of laws; by their invention of the art of manufacturing silk fabrics, which near the commencement of the Christian era were sold to the luxurious Romans for their weight in gold; by the manufacture, also, of porcelain

and China-ware, the best in the world ; by the early use, and perhaps invention, of gunpowder and the magnetic needle ; and by the invention of the art of printing five hundred years before it was known in the West. That they have good mental ability is also shown by their extensive literature, containing some works of sterling and permanent value ; by their thoroughly elaborated language, possessing much fullness and power of expression ; and by their long list of sages and literary men. China has given a literature, a code of morals, and a religion, to her dependencies, Manchuria, Mongolia, and Thibet, to the inhabitants of Cochin China, to the thirty-five millions of Japan, and to the Coreans. The people of all these countries look up to the Chinese as their acknowledged teachers. It is not too much to affirm, that China has for ages been the great centre of what light and civilization have been enjoyed throughout Eastern Asia. As an indication of their intellectual ability, the fact may also be mentioned that the few Chinese who have been educated in European and American colleges and universities have acquitted themselves with honor. A few years since, a Chinaman in Yale College bore off the first prize in his class, for merit in English composition.

Their strength of character is manifest in their firm adherence to the opinions and principles which they adopt ; and in the vital and recuperative energy of those ideas into which they have been educated, and which during their development and growth as a nation, have carried them through all political agitations and temporary impediments. The stability of their character is strikingly observable in their aversion to change ; in their love of order and method ; the regularity

of their habits; their diligence in business; and in their quiet and persevering industry.

They confessedly stand superior to all other Eastern races, in practical wisdom and common sense, and in the manly vigor of their physical, moral, and intellectual characters. Surely there is more encouragement in laboring to Christianize and elevate a nation like this than there is in the case of a people who have little strength of mind or of character.

4. But there is a dark, as well as bright side to this picture. The good qualities of the Chinese render their ignorance and superstition, their wickedness and lost condition, all the more lamentable, and should enlist our deepest sympathies and most earnest efforts for their salvation.

There are those who, boasting of the education and enlightenment, the civilization and morality of the Chinese, assert that these rendered all efforts to Christianize them uncalled for.

Chinese "education and enlightenment." It is a misnomer to speak of educated or learned Chinese. No Chinaman is learned or educated in our sense of those terms. No science is taught in their schools. Their literary men are as utterly ignorant of the natural sciences, of the geography and history of other countries, and of mathematics, and are as superstitious, as the most uncultivated classes. In their view, the earth is a plain occupied chiefly by China; the sun and stars revolve around the earth; the rain and the tides are caused by dragons; the wind, by tigers in the hills; sickness, by evil spirits; prosperity and adversity by imaginary principles, or essences, called the Ying and the Yang; necromancy, astrology, and every art of divination

are accredited sciences; these and countless other absurdities and superstitions are entertained as verities by the great body of the literati of China. Their education consists simply in committing to memory their "Four Books and Five Classics," with the commentaries upon them, and writing of ethical, historical, and poetical essays, which are made up largely of quotations from their classics.

Thus their memories are developed to the neglect and detriment of their reasoning faculties, while all freedom of thought and all originality are discouraged and precluded. Of those even thus very defectively educated, constituting the literary class, the number is very small, probably not more than two per cent. of the adult male population. Of those who can but indifferently read and write, there are perhaps thirty per cent.; while the education of females is entirely neglected. The ignorance and superstition of the people have kept China in a stagnant or retrograde condition more than two thousand years, constituting an effectual bar to a high state of civilization, and a clog to every move in the direction of progress.

The nature of Chinese civilization may be inferred from the following facts,—the people have no newspapers, no voice in the government, no politics, and no trial by jury; torture, as an ordeal to extort testimony from witnesses, and confession from supposed criminals, is in general use among the officials; they also practice the greatest cruelties upon offenders; in time of wars, the indiscriminate slaughter of innocent men, women, and children is usually practiced; the rudest warlike and industrial implements, handed down from ancient times, are still in universal use; the nation is characterized

by a prevailing lethargy, as if struck with paralysis, that gives it an air of senility, and the stamp of decay and death.

Christianity alone can impart that life and vigor to China which will enable her to throw off the incubus that has for ages pressed her down, and cause her to rise and take her place among civilized and enlightened nations, and enter upon a career of progress.

There are others who say that "the heathen being ignorant, and living according to the light which they possess, are not guilty and will not be lost." But what are the facts? Have not the heathen,—have not the Chinese,—a knowledge of the principles of moral law? The Chinese are great moralists in their way, and depend upon morality for salvation from punishment. They have an endless number of moral maxims, which they apply on every proper occasion. For example, "Punishment follows crime, as the shadow follows the substance." "We may conceal from man's eye, but not from Heaven's eye." "He who sins against Heaven, has no place for prayer." The readiness and correctness with which they will talk on moral subjects, and analyze moral character, and the earnestness with which they will condemn immoral conduct, show the moral "law written in their hearts."

But do they live according to the light that they possess? Certainly not. Their own conscience "accuses" them of doing wrong; and though its voice may be weaker in them than in those reared under the teachings of the Bible and amid Christian influences, still it makes itself heard. They are convinced of their sinfulness, and acknowledge it, and feel the need of some expiation of their guilt. Hence the numerous

expedients to which they resort, in order to avoid the consequences of their sins. No, they cannot excuse themselves; nor do they try to shield themselves with the excuses that some in Christian lands frame for them; they never affirm that "they do not know right from wrong,"—that "they are ignorant, hence innocent." When a Chinese performs an immoral act, if some heathen apologist should say to him, "you poor man, you did not know any better," he would take it as an insult.

The Confucianists, or literati, among whom we might expect a pure morality, if in any class, we find to be inveterately addicted to lying, treachery, and extortion. Among the rulers, all of whom are professed Confucianists, justice is unknown. Bribery, extortion, and oppression constitute the universal practice among the officials of every grade.

Avariciousness sways the hearts of all classes, from the highest to the lowest. There is no mode of deception and fraud, no trick nor art in trade, no quackery nor jugglery, in which the Chinese are not perfect adepts. Deception and lying are so common that they have almost lost the consciousness that they are wrong. Backbiting and quarreling, slandering and cursing, intrigues and broils, are universal. Pilfering and theft; extortion, robbery, and piracy; suicide, infanticide, and murder; lotteries, gambling-shops, opium dens, and brothels, are very common. In short, the description given in Romans of the moral condition of the heathen is true to the letter as applied to the Chinese.

Moreover, there is the great sin of idolatry,—a sin more frequently and severely condemned in the Bible than any other. Some have supposed that the Chinese

are not much attached to idolatrous worship. This is a mistake. If they were not thoroughly wedded to their idols, they surely would not spend so much time and money upon them. Nearly two hundred million dollars are annually expended in China upon idolatrous feasts and worship. For a period of over three thousand years idolatry, from small beginnings, has gradually been extending and strengthening its hold upon the nation. It has grown with its growth, and strengthened with its strength, until it has permeated every part of it, and interwoven itself into the very frame-work and texture of society. It enters largely into the customs and habits of the people, and constitutes a marked feature in all the more important transactions in life. It gives tone to every shade of religious belief and practice. Every pursuit in life has its own patron god. Even thieves and pirates have their patron gods, whose aid they invoke. Idolatry binds the minds with strong fetters of superstition; burdens them with a depressing dread of countless ills from fancied gods and evil spirits, besides the crushing weight of expense. Millions earn their living by manufacturing and vending shrines, idols, and other articles used in idolatrous worship. Their idolatry assumes a Protean form. The gods of their "three religions, Confucianism, Taouism, and Buddhism, are worshipped indiscriminately by all. Many never visit an idol-temple to worship, yet they worship the 'kitchen god,' or the 'god of wealth,' or the 'local god;' and all worship 'heaven and earth,' and their 'ancestors.'"

Now, how are the heathen to be saved without the gospel? While they will not be condemned for rejecting the gospel, which they have never heard, nor for

disobeying the Bible, which they have never read, yet they will be condemned for disobeying the law of God "written in their hearts," and for not living according to the light which they possess. And while, like the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, it will be more tolerable for them in the day of judgment than for those who have rejected the full blaze of the gospel's light, still it by no means follows that they will be acquitted as innocent and be saved. They have no innocence, no purity, no fitness for the pure abode of heaven and its holy and spiritual employments.

Where then is there any hope for the hundreds of millions of heathen in China, in their present state? Missionaries do not go to that land to preach the gospel to poor innocents, over whom a fate is impending which they do not deserve. It is because they are deserving and exposed to everlasting perdition, that the gospel is preached to them, the only hope of salvation. And the command of Christ lays the obligation upon Christians to make known the gospel to every one of those vast multitudes.

5. In order to a more complete understanding of China as a mission-field, a brief review of its religious history will be necessary.

In most ancient times the Chinese evidently had some knowledge of God, whom they designated "Heaven," and the "Supreme Ruler." Yet the heads of states, of tribes, and of families, constituted their only priests. In addition to the worship of "Heaven," they sacrificed to the "Six Honored Ones," which were probably the tutelary gods presiding over the more conspicuous objects of nature; they also made offerings to the rivers and hills, to their ancestors, and to the host

of spirits. They also were very much given to the practice of divination. But their most ancient books are silent respecting rewards and punishments.

Confucius, who flourished about 500 B. C., founded his system upon the sayings and practices of the ancients. He edited and expounded some of their works, and wrote a history. The sayings and doings of Confucius himself were recorded by his disciples after his death.

The ethical teachings of Confucius, consisted in inculcating the "Five Virtues," and the duties pertaining to the "Five Relations" in life. The "Five Relations" were those subsisting between emperor and officer, father and son, husband and wife, older and younger brothers, and between friends. The "Five Virtues" were benevolence, righteousness, propriety, knowledge and faith. His moral precepts were good, and have had a very great, and in some respects beneficial influence upon the nation.

But his system has a few radical defects. He ignored a future state of rewards and punishments. He also taught that man's nature is naturally good, and that he may by his own exertions become holy. This false view of man's moral state, tends to foster pride and self-righteousness, and leads to the rejection of the scriptural doctrine of the new birth, and of the necessity of a Saviour to deliver from sin and its consequences. Confucius inculcated the worship of ancestors. This being regarded as the highest act and clearest proof of filial piety, a duty largely dwelt upon by the venerated sage, and by the whole class of moralists, and being also recognized by law, it is of all forms of religious worship in China, the most popular, the most

venerated, and the most endeared to the hearts of the people. But the tendency of the practice of making offerings to the spirits of their ancestors, has been to foster universal devil-worship.

Confucius often spoke of "Heaven" in terms that can only be appropriately applied to a personal Deity. But his later expositors have interpreted "Heaven" to mean merely the material "heaven and earth;" they have deified *cosmos*, and thus by their pantheistic teaching, have obscured the ancient and Confucian idea of a "Supreme Ruler." An atheistic philosophy was developed, chiefly by Chufucius about the middle of the twelfth century, which is extensively held by the literary men of the present day. This philosophy attributes the existence and order of the universe to a self-existing, perpetually operating essence, guided by an eternal principle of right. The essence and principle are indissolubly united, but are not spiritual in their nature, and are devoid of intelligence. The existence of spiritual beings,—whether men, gods, or evil-spirits,—is attributed to the same cause. Growth and decay, life and death, in short all the changes and vicissitudes that are transpiring in the universe, are produced by the oscillating operations of the essence described by Chinese writers as "motion and rest," "expanding and contracting," and designated by the "dual powers," the "male and female principles," the *Yang* and the *Ying*. Order and virtue exist in consequence of the controlling presence of the principle, while the operations of the essence are often lawless, overstepping the bounds which the principle of right prescribes, and producing moral evil, anarchy, and distress in the universe. Thus this philosophy dethrones the eternal Author and Sovereign

of the universe; subjects man to a blind fate; tends to uproot all sense of moral accountability; accommodates itself and gives license to the deepest depravity and wickedness; gives scope to any amount of superstition; and lays a foundation for the whole system of geomancy, and prognostication. The withering, benumbing, deadening influence which this system exerts upon the religious instincts and moral sensibilities, no one can realize unless brought into contact with consciences thus "seared," and the hearts thus rendered "hard as adamant."

Buddhism was introduced into China from India, about A. D. 66. This system answers the wants of man's religious nature far better than Confucianism or the atheistic philosophy, inasmuch as it furnishes a full system of idolatrous worship and religious superstition, and holds out future rewards and punishments, which, though of a gross and material character, are very impressive to ignorant minds. The system, however, exerts but little moral restraint upon its adherents. Its ordinary worship is simple, requiring but slight mental or physical exertion, thus adapting itself to man's natural indolence as well as ignorance. Some of its feasts and rites are showy, and calculated to please and captivate the dark-minded and superstitious multitude. Its temples are costly and numerous; its priests number over a million; and, what has great influence with the Chinese, it is ancient, and its rites and superstitious observances are long established and almost universal customs; hence it is very popular among the masses of the people.

Tauism originated with a Chinese philosopher, *Lan-tze*, who was born B. C. 604, hence was contemporary

with Confucius. His great work was a "Treatise on Truth and Virtue," a very abstruse and transcendental production. The Tauist system is materialistic, including an atheistic theory of the universe, and the so-called science of alchemy and astrology. It has been dignified by the term "rationalism," but a far more befitting title for it, as it now exists, is sorcery. Its devotees are much given to conjuration, necromancy, and devil-worship. They also, like the Buddhists, worship numerous idols. The chief obstacles which this form of idolatry presents to the reception of the gospel, consist in the doubt which it tends to throw upon the testimony of prophecy and miracles, the inspiration of the prophets and apostles, and the divinity of Christ, and in the peculiar fascination which sorcery and magical rites have over unenlightened minds.

The above three religions of China are not considered by the people as antagonistic sects, hence it is very common for the same persons to profess and perform the rites and worship of them all.

Of other religionists in China, the Mohammedans are most numerous. They began to come from Arabia as early as the seventh century. Their number has gradually increased by emigration from Mohammedan states, and by natural descent, and not by proselytism. They are now found in all parts of the empire, have mosques in all the large cities, and number a population of over a million.

There is also at least one colony of Jews in China, at the city of Kai-fung in the province of Honan. They claim to have settled there at a period prior to the commencement of the Christian era, and number about three hundred persons. They have the law and some

other portions of the Scriptures in Hebrew, but their last rabbi who could read the sacred language died about forty years since. Their ritual worship has ceased, circumcision is neglected, their synagogue, built A. D. 1183, has recently been pulled down and the timbers and stones sold; and a few years will, not unlikely, put a period to their existence as a distinct people.

Christianity in some of its forms, is no new thing in China. There is a strong probability, to say the least, that the gospel was preached in China, and churches founded, during the first century. According to the ritual of the Syrian churches on the Malabar coast and in Persia, the apostle Thomas himself preached the gospel and founded churches in China. Assemanus, a learned Syrian historian, maintains the same view. Mosheim says, "There are various arguments collected from learned men, to show that the Christian faith was carried to China, if not by the apostle Thomas, by the first teachers of Christianity." He also states that "Arnobius writing about the year 300, speaks of the Christian deeds done in India, and among the Seres, (Chinese,) Persians, and Medes." Chinese history also, make a clear reference to Christianity in China at this period. On the whole, the historic testimony is quite united and strong in favor of the view that Christian churches were established in China during the first century.

As we come down to the sixth century, we find that the Nestorian Christians certainly had missions in China. It was in the year 552, according to Gibbon, that the "two Persian (Nestorian) monks, who had long resided in China, brought the eggs of silk worms thence to Constantinople." Mosheim states that "from the

Nestorian school at Nisibus (Persia) issued those who in the fifth and following century carried the Nestorian doctrines into Egypt, Syria, Arabia, India, Tartary, and even to China."

In the seventh and eighth centuries the Nestorian missions in China were very flourishing. This we learn from an inscription upon a remarkable marble tablet, discovered A. D. 1625, in Sigan, the capital of the Shen-si province, and still to be seen there, which was erected A. D. 781. From this inscription it is evident that Christianity, as taught by the Nestorians, and of a much purer type than Romanism, had made great progress among the Chinese; the greatest prosperity occurring during the eighth century. It enjoyed the special favor and patronage of six or seven emperors of the *Tung* dynasty; the Bible, or at least portions of it, was translated and was "in the library of the palace"; churches were built and adorned, and priests were appointed and supported by the command and munificence of the Chinese emperors; many men occupying high official stations were the warm friends of the foreign missionaries, and the firm adherents and zealous supporters of the faith; and converts, churches, and priests were numerous throughout the empire.

Sixty-four years after the erection of the tablet, A. D. 845, persecution arose, and by an edict of the emperor, *Wu-tsung*, "the priests that came from Taksin," (Syria), numbering no less than three thousand, were ordered to retire to private life. From this time, these missions appear to have declined. Still, foreign priests continued for several centuries occasionally to arrive, and churches continued to exist in various parts of the empire, until a fierce persecution arose that

“scattered the Christians, and changed their place of worship into heathen temples.” This occurred about the middle of the sixteenth century, when the churches had already become very corrupt and feeble. Since that time, it is not certainly known that a single Nestorian church has existed in the empire. The Jesuits in the early part of the seventeenth century, found some traces of Nestorian Christians, but they were classed by the Chinese among the Mohammedans and Jews; while the greater part had become idolaters. The benevolent and eleemosynary institutions of China, there can be little doubt, come from these missions, for the tablet speaks of distinguished native Christians “distributing alms, giving food to the hungry, clothes to those suffering from cold, and curing the sick,” in “imitation of the Christian missionaries.”

Roman Catholic missions have also been in operation in China for a long period. Their first missions were commenced by the Dominicans and Franciscans, in 1292, or nearly six hundred years since. They continued till the expulsion of the Mongols from the throne of China, in 1368, when their missions were broken up, after having existed but seventy-six years. From this time, for a period of two hundred and thirteen years, we hear no more of Roman Catholic missions in China.

But in the year 1581, the Jesuits commenced a mission. It continued to prosper for a period of one hundred and forty-three years, and many churches were established. Then, in consequence of the political intrigues of the Jesuits on the one hand, and the envy and suspicion of the Chinese officials and literati on the other, a fierce persecution arose. Since that time, the missions have suffered frequent severe perse-

cutions; but the missionaries have continued to prosecute their work, through various prosperous and adverse fortunes, down to the present time. Their zeal and self-denial, their steadfastness and perseverance, amid persecution, torture, and death, merit high praise, and are worthy to be imitated by all missionaries of a purer faith.

The statistics of Roman Catholic missions in China, in 1866, were as follows: Bishops 20; Colleges 12; Foreign Priests 233; Native Priests 237; Native Christians 363,580.

A Greek church, composed of twenty-five captive Russians, one of whom was a priest, was established at Peking, in 1685. In 1689, a treaty was formed between the Russian and Chinese governments, which resulted in the permanent establishment of a college of Greek priests at the capital, usually composed of the Archimandrite, or head priest, who also acted as Russian ambassador, a clergyman, a physician, a mathematician or astronomer, and eight or ten young Russians learning the Manchu and Chinese languages. They have not until recently sought to proselyte the natives to their faith. They have in Peking two churches, and between three and four hundred native converts.

6. Protestant missions to the Chinese were commenced in 1807. In that year, the Rev. Robert Morrison, of the London missionary society, began a mission at Canton. As China was not yet opened, and the East India Company, which then monopolized the trade with China, was opposed to missions, Mr. Morrison was not at liberty to preach openly; but "he held secret meetings with a few natives in his own room, where with locked doors, he read and explained the

gospels every Lord's Day." He labored alone for six years, and was then joined by the Rev. William Milne.

Up to 1841, a period of thirty-five years, fifty-eight missionaries had joined the various missions, of whom only four came direct to Canton; eight were stationed at Macao, a small peninsula near Canton, occupied by Portuguese; the remaining forty-six were stationed among the Chinese settlements in the Malayan Archipelago. The missionaries studied the language; conducted day and boarding-schools; prepared and circulated a large number of tracts and Scriptures, in both the Chinese and Malay languages; and preached the gospel extensively to the people.

In 1842, when British cannon had opened the long closed gates of China, the missionaries, evidently feeling that their position in settlements out of China was unfavorable to their work, removed and established themselves at the five treaty ports of China-proper. Missionaries in greatly increased numbers entered the field, and with great zeal began to lay broad and deep the foundations of their future missions. Lots, often with difficulty, were secured; buildings were erected; schools, dispensaries, printing establishments, and chapels were opened; the colloquial dialects and the written language were acquired; and the gospel was faithfully proclaimed. Thus for eighteen years they labored at the five ports, and on the island of Hongkong, which had been ceded to England.

By the treaties of 1860, secured by the second war, ten new ports were opened, chiefly on the river Yangtze, and in the north of China. At most of these, missions were soon established. Day and boarding-schools have been extensively maintained; hundreds of native

preachers have been raised up in training schools; dispensaries and hospitals have been established at nearly all the ports, where more than one hundred thousand patients have annually been treated, and at the same time have been brought under the influence of the gospel; five complete versions of the Bible and over seven hundred other treatises have been prepared and circulated in vast numbers. The Scriptures have been very extensively circulated, chiefly by sale, throughout fifteen of the eighteen provinces. But the preaching of the gospel has been the grand means employed, and not without encouraging success.

In estimating success, the numerous obstacles to be overcome must be taken into account. The vast inert mass to be acted upon; the pride, self-conceit, and exclusiveness of the people; their suspicions and prejudices against foreigners and everything foreign, intensified by the dissolute conduct of most foreigners who visit their shores, and by the pernicious opium traffic forced upon them; their strong attachment to ancient and revered customs, and utter aversion to change; their false religions, their puerile superstitions, and abominable idolatries; their sordid worldliness, inordinate love of money, and their grossly material views and aspirations both respecting this life and that to come; the ignorance, depraved character, and vicious habits of the people; added to these, the difficulties of the language, and the paucity of adequate terms to convey Christian ideas;—all these circumstances, if taken into account, will give some idea of the obstacles in the way of the successful propagation of Christianity in that empire.

The vast amount of preparatory labor necessary to be

expended before extensive results can be attained, must also be taken into account in estimating success. Much labor spent in laying the foundations of missions in a heathen land, does not appear upon the surface. In China especially, it was slow and difficult work to remove the prejudices, the ignorance and superstitions of the people, which, like a vast pile of rubbish, had been accumulating for ages. And when Christianity has already overcome prejudice against foreigners and their religion; when it has broken the spell of superstition, and hurled idolatry from its throne in the heart, its difficult work is but fairly begun. It must then encounter not only natures besotted, "dead in trespasses and sins," but also a tangled and luxurious growth of deep rooted vices.

As was to be expected, the visible progress of the work, at first, was slow. The results, in conversions and gathering numbers in churches, were not immediately abundant. In consequence of this, and the want of a due regard to the preparatory labor necessary to be performed, and the numerous obstacles to be overcome, some prematurely and unwarrantably have affirmed that "Protestant missions in China are a failure."

Happily we are now able to point to results of missionary labor in that most difficult field, which prove beyond all question that Protestant missions there are a success. The foundations of God's spiritual temple have there been laid, and the walls of the glorious superstructure are now beginning to appear. The region of country already occupied, embraces a large portion of the six provinces on the coast, extending from Canton and Hongkong in the south, to Kalgan, one hundred and fifty miles beyond Peking, in the

north ; a region nearly two thousand miles in length by from one hundred to six hundred miles in breadth and containing an area of about four hundred thousand square miles, or a fourth part of China proper. Throughout this section, missions have been established in about forty walled cities and three hundred and sixty villages, making a total of four hundred stations and out-stations, which constitute centres of Christian light and knowledge to the regions adjacent. Over four hundred native preachers have been raised up, who are constantly employed in preaching the gospel to their countrymen. About ten thousand converts have been received into the churches, of whom some have already gone home to be with Jesus, while some seven thousand are at present communicants.

It is a cheering fact that the ratio of conversions, of out-stations, and of natives entering the ministry, is every year rapidly increasing. The number in all these departments has, of late, doubled once in a period of a little over three years. Should the same ratio of increase continue, we may reasonably expect that by the year 1900 the native Christians in China will number over two millions. The following table will give some idea of the rate of progress :

	1853	1863	1864	1868
Stations and Out-stations.....	26	108	130	306
Native Preachers.....	59	141	170	365
Native Christians.....	351	1974	2607	5743

But mere statistics give a very inadequate view of the results of these missions. The incidental results are also important. Prejudices have been wearing away ; confidence in the missionaries has increased ; their peaceful and benevolent intentions are becoming

widely acknowledged ; tens of thousands have had their confidence in their false gods and superstitions shaken ; much Christian knowledge has been diffused, which, like good seed sown in good ground, will ere long spring up and yield a bountiful harvest.

There is one consideration, also, too important to be omitted ; that there are facilities for the evangelization of China, which in a measure, offset the obstacles. Though China merits the designation of being a hard mission field, still there are many circumstances which may be classed as favorable to the propagation of the gospel. First, we may mention facilities for travelling throughout the empire. True there are no railroads, and, except in the north of China, no wheel carriages nor carriage roads ; yet the facilities for travelling by water, are more complete than those of any other country. In addition to the numerous rivers and their tributaries, there are countless canals, forming a complete net-work of water communication over all the plains of the country. The missionary has but to step into a boat, taking with him his assistant, books, food, bed, and by a quiet and easy mode of conveyance, he is soon at any part of the field that he wishes to visit. The clanship of families, and the custom of living together in villages and cities, will also facilitate the spread of the gospel. The eminently social habits of the people will contribute to the same end, since what one person learns he soon communicates to others. The settled habits of the people constitute another circumstance far more favorable to their evangelization than if they were roving, fickle, warlike tribes. Another facility is the universality of the written language. Though the spoken dialects are numerous and very

diverse, the written language is the same throughout the empire; so that the Scriptures and other books and tracts, when once printed, at any station, may be circulated everywhere, requiring no revision though carried to the most distant parts of the land, and even to several bordering countries.

Closely connected with the above, is another advantage, that the views, objections, and characteristics to be met with are substantially the same throughout the empire; hence the same arguments found best adapted to combat false doctrines, meet objections, and convince of the truth of Christianity, in one place, would be found equally useful in other parts of the empire. Again, the intelligence of the people upon moral subjects, as compared with more barbarous nations, constitutes a stepping-stone to their more ready acquaintance with the precepts of Christianity and when converted, to their more rapid progress in religious knowledge. Moreover, their religious instincts are on the side of Christianity. They feel themselves in some way amenable to a power higher than men or gods. Something within them points to a future existence and future retributions, and they feel the need of some sure directory in all these matters, and some means by which their sense of guilt may be removed, and they may attain a happy state of future existence. The adaptation of Christianity to meet all these spiritual wants and religious aspirations of the soul, gives it an important vantage ground, and does not fail to commend it powerfully to the minds of even the heathen.

But as the greatest obstacle to the propagation of Christianity in China is found in the depravity of the heart, so on the other hand, the greatest encouragement

is found in the promises of God. One "Lo, I am with you," constitutes a surer guaranty of success, and affords more encouragement in the work than a thousand favorable circumstances. Still these facilities have their place, and when the Spirit shall be poured on the people from on high, and the word of the Lord shall have free course and be glorified, then these favoring circumstances no doubt will be found to greatly accelerate its progress. Owing to the denseness of the population, their tendency to move in masses, and to the facilities enumerated, we may reasonably expect that when the Chinese begin in earnest to "seek the Lord," the work of conversion will move forward with greater rapidity than has ever been witnessed in any other nation.

7. And now, that which should greatly enhance the interest especially of American Christians in this field, is the fact that it is brought so near to them. The establishment of the Pacific mail steamship line, and the Pacific railroad, has revolutionized the relations of the foreign mission-field to the home churches. Formerly, in contemplating the foreign field, our attention was directed across the Atlantic toward the "great East;" now, we are compelled by force of new circumstances, to gaze westward; beyond the "great West," across the broad Pacific, there looms in view, like Alps rising on Alps, a greater West; and here we find our great foreign mission field. Formerly, China was at the very "ends of the earth," too far away to awaken much interest; now, the facilities for intercommunication have brought her almost to our very doors, and she is beginning to command our attention. Formerly, missionaries to China were about five months

in reaching their field; now, they can reach it in five weeks. Then, they had the discomforts of a long voyage "around the Cape" in a sailing vessel; now, in a splendid and comfortable "palace-sleeping-car" they cross the continent to San Francisco in a week, thence in a magnificent steamship, with every comfort that can be enjoyed at sea, they cross the Pacific and reach China in less than a month.

In the Pacific railroad crossing the rugged Sierra Nevada and the lofty Rocky Mountains, have we not a striking fulfilment of that prophecy in Isaiah xlix. 11: "I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted?" Is not that road evidently God's "highway" for sending his word and his servants to Christianize the idolatrous nations of Asia? This view is confirmed by the next verse, "Behold, these shall come from far; and lo! these from the north, and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim." Sinæ or Thinæ was the ancient name of China, to which land the allusion of the prophet no doubt here refers. If this interpretation be correct, then this great highway across the mountains has direct connection with the conversion of China to God. Is there no marked providence in thus bringing that old, exclusive, populous, heathen nation so near our Christian land? Is there no significancy in the fact also, that China is pouring upon our shores her heathen population? Is there no divine plan of mercy for the benighted multitudes of Asia, manifest in bringing the oldest and the newest empires into contact; in the meeting of the eastern and the western courses of civilization; in bringing American enterprise to bear upon Chinese lethargy, and a living purifying Christianity to operate upon their

corrupt heathenism? Is not the finger of God pointing Christians to the long neglected multitudes of China, and in effect saying: "Say not ye, there are yet four months, and then cometh harvest, behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest"?

Never has the Christian church in any previous period of her history, had so wide a door of usefulness opened, nor so great a demand upon her efforts and resources. Never before has any mission field invited the people of God to engage in an enterprize of such vastness and grandeur.

The question now arises, will the disciples of Jesus, in view of these vast perishing multitudes now in the providence of God rendered easily accessible, yield hearty obedience to his last great command? Will the people of God go where he opens the way, and clearly points the road? Are they ready to follow "the pillar of cloud," and "the pillar of fire," whithersoever they may lead? Will the churches of Christ take possession in his name, of the "goodly land" of China?

Christians of happy, free America, to you in a most emphatic sense, is intrusted that which alone can meet the wants of those benighted millions of your fellow men. To you is committed the antidote for all their ills; the light that can dispel their darkness; and the only means which can secure them pardon, hope, holiness, and eternal salvation and happiness. To you it is granted richly to enjoy the gospel with its manifold blessings. Hence a correspondingly heavy responsibility is laid upon you to impart it to others. You are "debtors" to all those who are not similarly blessed. And how greatly is that debt increased by the abundant

means and facilities placed in your hands for disseminating the gospel. God is pouring wealth into your coffers for a higher purpose than selfish indulgence. To make this use of riches will bring leanness upon your own souls, and ruin upon your children, and eventually upon the churches and the nation. The ancient people of God were required to give for the various services of the Lord, nearly one-half of their entire income. In a more spiritual kingdom, under a dispensation of better promises, possessing far more means and a vastly enlarged field for benevolent labors, the people of God now are required to give in no stinted manner, but "every one" is regularly to give "as God hath prospered him." The establishment of Christ's kingdom on earth, occupies the first place in the divine counsels respecting our world; so also should it have the first place in the heart of every Christian, and in his plans, his business, and his use of the property over which God has made him steward. Learn then, Christians, highly favored of heaven, from the advantages that you enjoy, and the means confided to your trust, both your peculiar responsibility and your exalted privilege.

Has that responsibility been fairly recognized respecting the millions of China? It is true something has been done. Twenty-four missionary societies, of which one-third are in the United States, have over one hundred and sixty missionaries in that field, of whom about one hundred and forty are ordained. One ordained missionary to some two million six hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants! Is this what should be done by all Christendom to save the hundreds of millions of souls in China? Why, opium-sellers from professedly Christian nations annually sell to Chinese over sixty

million dollar's worth of the drug, and can show over three million of confirmed opium-inebriates, whom they have helped to ruin body and soul!

How little has been done for the salvation of China, compared with what remains to be done, and with the ability of Christians! The labor hitherto has been chiefly preparatory. But the time has now arrived for putting forth direct efforts on a large scale, for the evangelization of the people. This enterprise demands large views and plans; a large amount of faith, prayer, zeal, and liberal giving, and a far greater number of laborers. Oh, Christian, does not the authority and love of Christ, the vast multitude and miserable condition of your fellow men in China, and the debt that you owe them, constrain you to employ all the ability with which God has endowed you, to give them the gospel, which alone is adapted to regenerate and save their souls?

Bible and Publication Society, 530 Arch St., Philadelphia.

province has about ten divisions, called Fu; and each Fu is again divided into about an equal number of Hien. These divisions and subdivisions of the provinces are generally translated in English, departments, or prefectures, and districts. The above-mentioned divisions and subdivisions are much larger than our corresponding counties and townships. While the empire has its capital at Peking, so each province, Fu, and Hien, has its capital or seat of civil power, in which the officers exercising jurisdiction over it reside. While our national name, United States, covers not only the states, but the comparatively sparsely-populated territories, so the Chinese Empire includes, in addition to the eighteen provinces, or China proper, Manchuria, Mongolia, Sungaria, Eastern Turkistan, Koko-nor, and Thibet. The most of these territories belonged originally to the present Tartar rulers of China, and, after the subjugation of the eighteen provinces, were united with them in the same empire. The whole circumference of the empire is about twelve thousand miles, and the whole area about five millions of square miles—nearly twice that of the United States, exclusive of the lately-acquired Russian possessions.

Here the parallel between the United States and China ceases, and in nearly every point of comparison we have a decided contrast. The capitals of the different divisions of the empire are all walled cities. These form a striking feature of the country. There are important distinctions between the cities of the third class, most of which are designated by the character Hien, a few by the character Cheo, and a few by the character Ting, which need not here be particularly

described. Though varying considerably in size, these different cities present nearly the same uniform appearance. They are surrounded by walls from twenty to thirty-five feet in height, and are entered by large arched gateways, which open into the principal streets, and are shut and barred at night. These walls are from twenty to twenty-five feet thick at the base, and somewhat narrower at the top. The circumferences of the provincial cities vary from eight to fifteen English miles; those of the Fu cities from four to ten; and those of the Hien cities from two or three to five.

The provincial capitals contain an average population of about one million inhabitants; the Fu cities from one hundred thousand or less to six or eight hundred thousand, while the cities of the third class, which are much more numerous, generally contain several tens of thousands.

All the names to be found on our largest maps of China are the names of walled cities, and many of those of the third class are not down for want of space. The whole number in the aggregate is over seventeen hundred. Supposing them to have an average circumference of four miles each, the whole length of wall such as has been described would be sixty-eight hundred miles, nearly one-third the circumference of the globe. If we add to this the fifteen hundred miles of continuous wall separating China from Chinese Tartary in the North, it will swell the estimate to more than eight thousand miles.